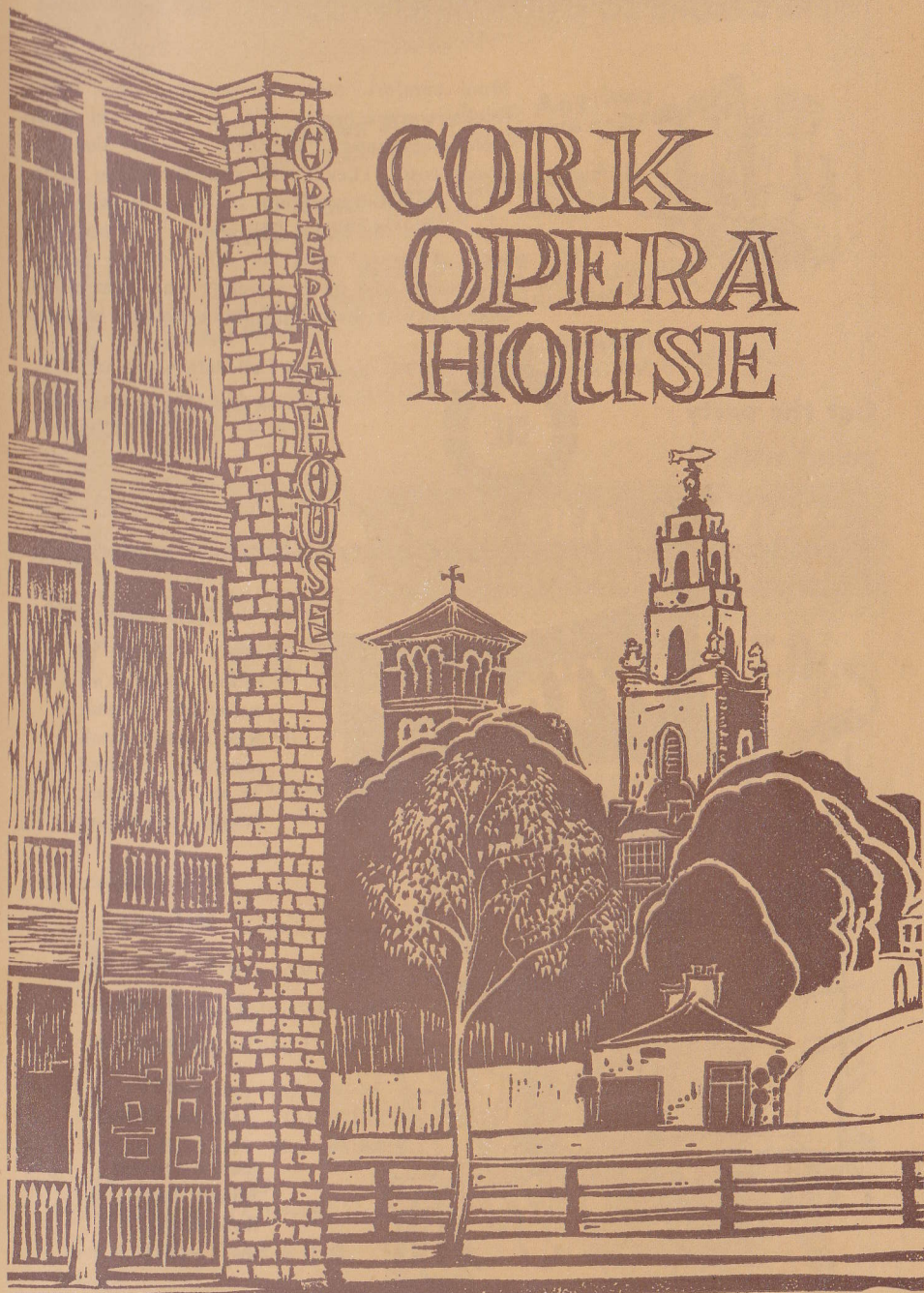
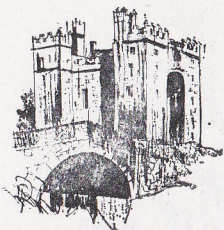


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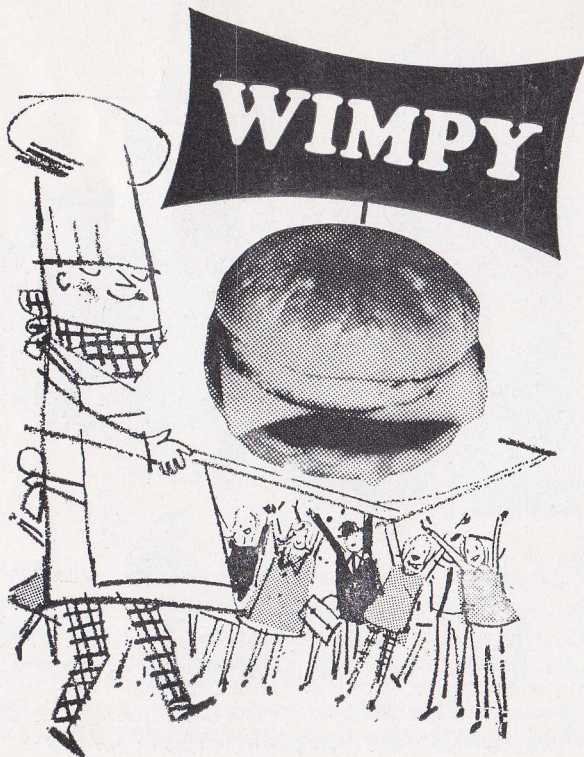


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First performed Turin 1896

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

Place: Latin Quarter, Paris

Time: About 1830

ACT ONE

An artist's studio in Montmartre, Christmas Eve

ACT TWO

Outside the Cafe Momus in the Latin Quarter, the same evening

ACT THREE

An inn near a toll gate, two months later

ACT FOUR

The studio in Montmartre, some months later

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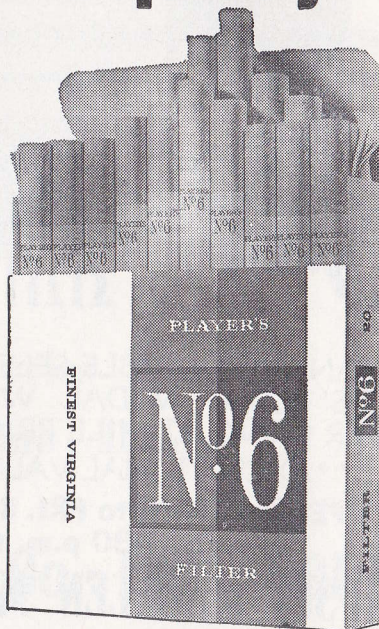
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"LA BOHEME"

THE STORY OF THE OPERA

ACT ONE

THE scene is a typical Bohemian studio of a poverty-stricken aspect, on Christmas Eve, where the four Bohemians — Rudolph, a poet, Marcel, a painter, Schaunard, a musician, and Colline, a philosopher, live and work. From the window one sees the snow-clad roofs of Paris. But there is no fire in the stove, and Marcel and Rudolph are very cold. They finally decide to light the fire with one of Rudolph's manuscripts. Colline enters, despondent at not having been able to pawn anything, but regains his spirit at the sight of the cheerful blaze. Their spirits rise still further when Schaunard enters with provisions and wine and explains that he has earned some money. They decide to drink and then to dine at a restaurant. The landlord, Benoit, enters demanding the rent, and having drunk some wine, confesses to an escapade, whereat the four artists, in mock indignation, turn him out of the room. They then propose to go to dinner at the Cafe Momus in the Latin Quarter, but Rudolph says he must stay to finish an article for a paper. The others have scarcely gone when a timid knock is heard at the door and Mimi enters and excuses herself, explaining that as she was on her way to her room her candle had gone out. She is seized with a fit of coughing and faints, and when she revives she lights her candle and is about to go out, when she remembers that she had put her key on the table. As Rudolph goes to the door, his candle too is blown out, and they look for the key in the dark, but in vain, for Rudolph has artfully put it in his pocket. As they both grope under the table, their hands meet, and this gives Rudolph his opportunity for singing his romance "Che gelida manina" and he goes on to explain who and what he is. In reply Mimi sings her famous song "Si, mi chiamano Mimi." She explains that her real name is Lucia, and she is a flower girl living in an attic in the same house. By this time Rudolph's companions have grown impatient and call for him from below. He answers that he will follow as soon as he can. Then Rudolph passionately declares his love for Mimi in "O soave fanciulla" as they go out arm-in-arm.

ACT TWO

A public place outside the Cafe Momus in the Latin Quarter, the favourite haunt of the four Bohemians. The bustle of Christmas Eve is at its height. Colline, Schaunard and Marcel, who have not been able to find room in the crowded cafe, take possession of a table on the pavement. Rudolph and Mimi join them a little later. They order supper, and presently Musetta, a former flame of Marcel, enters accompanied by a rich admirer, Alcindoro, a Councillor of state whom she treats very badly. She sees Marcel and tries in vain to attract his attention. Marcel is in great agitation and is about to go when Musetta sings her waltz song "Quando me'n vo" which holds him spellbound. Musetta gets rid of her troublesome admirer and Marcel rushes forward to her. All go off as Alcindoro returns and is confronted with the bill for the whole party.

ACT THREE

Two months have elapsed. Mimi seeks Marcel outside an inn on the outskirts of Paris. She appeals to him to help her. She complains of Rudolph's mad groundless jealousy. Marcel goes in to waken Rudolph while Mimi hides herself. Rudolph comes out and explains to Marcel that he is heartbroken that he has no money and cannot do anything to cure her of the terrible illness which is killing her. Mimi is overcome with grief and her sobs and coughing reveal her presence to Rudolph. Musetta's laugh can be heard from inside the inn. While Mimi and Rudolph express their love, Marcel and Musetta have a fierce lovers' quarrel.

ACT FOUR

Back in the Bohemians' garrett. Marcel has seen Mimi, and Rudolph has seen Musetta, both living in luxury. They utter their feelings in "O Mimi tu piu non torni." They are interrupted by Schaunard and Colline who arrive with food—bread and herrings—and they pretend the meal is a banquet. They grow merry and dance. When the fun is at its height, Musetta enters, greatly agitated, and tells them Mimi is with her but too weak to climb the stairs. Rudolph rushes out and brings her back and places her gently on the bed, and Musetta tells the others how she had found Mimi; she had begged to be allowed to die with Rudolph. Musetta takes off her earrings, tells Marcel to sell them and buy food and medicine and goes out with him. Colline decides to pawn his overcoat "Vecchia zimarra, senti." Schaunard also goes. Musetta and Marcel return with medicine, and as they attend to Mimi she dies. Rudolph flings himself on the bed sobbing.

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